the initiative in reorganizing the government on the basis of a coalition and accelerating the convocation of the Constituent Assembly. A workable electoral law could have been drafted in a few weeks. Preparations for an election could have been completed in two months. Thus a Constituent Assembly could have convened in June. It is interesting to speculate what would have been the course of events in Russia and abroad if a strong Provisional Government with a vigorous participation of democratic groups had taken over the helm after the March revolution; and if this government had succeeded in convoking the Constituent Assembly and transferring power to a regular government in, say, four or five months.

THE POLITICAL PARTIES

The lack of consistency in the policy of the Soviets was due partly to the split in the political parties of the left. Formally, there were two leftist parties on the scene—the Socialist Revolutionary party, which had absorbed the bulk of the former Laborites, and the Social Democratic party. The latter had definitely split between the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks. The Bolsheviks represented the extreme left in the Soviets, while the S-R and Mensheviks formed the center and right wing. This block, however, was split among half a dozen or more loosely defined groups. Tseretelli, with his desire to ensure democratic peace and his opposition to the annexationist policy of the Cadets, was not patriotic enough for the moderate Laborites, now representing the right wing of the S-R party, while the left elements of the same party considered his policy too nationalistic and contrary to international socialism. Actually the moderate socialist majority in the Petrograd Soviet was a loose agglomeration of members of several groups.

My own position in this political spectrum was close to the center—or perhaps somewhat right of center—of the majority of the Executive Committee. However, during my first two or three weeks in Petrograd I remained in touch with dissident Bolsheviks whom I tried to win to the policy of national defense. Later I shared with the Menshevist leader Dan the responsibility of editing *Izvestia*, writing resolutions and appeals for the Soviet, and interpreting its decisions in editorials. Dan wrote articles and declarations explaining our policy in terms of the party program. I tried to reach a broader audience of workers and soldiers. Although we generally agreed on political matters, we were too different temperamentally to find pleasure in our close association.